

Good evening,

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee, I am Dr. William Pizzuto, Director of the UCONN Waterbury and Torrington Regional Campuses. I have worked at the University for 15 years.

Thank you for listening to me, and for all of your support for the University of Connecticut.

We understand the challenges that you face in reducing the budget deficit and we are grateful that you are indeed working diligently to address this.

One of the reasons that I have dedicated my professional career to the University of Connecticut was the dynamic investment that the state has been making to higher education. At a time when other states were not investing in their Flagship University, you, our legislators have made strategic investments in UConn and that is what enabled us to achieve the amazing progress discussed by President Herbst earlier in the day.

The recommended budget released last week creates a gap of approximately \$40 million between the state funding and what is needed to operate the university next year. A reduction to the appropriation in that amount would without question have a devastating impact on this progress.

In our urban areas such as Waterbury, Torrington and the other regional campuses these cuts would dramatically affect access to courses and programs offered for our students. These cuts will impact the availability of faculty to teach courses, which in turn affects degree completion rates and ultimately entry into the world of work with a degree from UCONN.

Almost every student at the regional campuses has a job outside of school. They are commuter students who often take buses to the campus or car pool or drive the family car to get to class. Their time is extremely limited and they often juggle family needs, job requirements, and academic requirements on a daily basis.

The students' academic goals and affordability will be significantly hampered by these deep budget cuts. As they strive to meet their dreams of higher education, their programs of study will be put on hold, or eliminated altogether, due to program, faculty, and staff cuts.

Many students at my campuses are first generation students whose families have sacrificed to send their sons and daughters to UConn to attain something that was unattainable for them. They are extremely proud of UConn and realize what it can do to provide a quality of life for their children that they themselves have never experienced.

We are educating students to become urban educators, engineers, and nurses; our students work in our hospitals, banks, development corporations, social service agencies, and technology companies just to name a few.

I cannot stress enough the consequences of this reduction in appropriation. The effect on our students will be DEVASTATING--our academic programs and the role UConn will play in the state's future will be severely limited.

The best economic development tool that any state can have is an educated workforce. I urge you to consider helping all of these students by giving them the very best chance of succeeding, and thriving in our fine state.

On behalf of the UConn students, I thank you.

From:

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